
EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE

Congressman George Miller, Chairman

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Chairman Kildee Statement At Subcommittee Hearing On Improving Early Childhood Development Policies and Practices

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education for a subcommittee hearing on “Improving Early Childhood Development Policies and Practices.”*

It is appropriate that this is our first hearing this congress, both because we are here to focus on the first years of a child’s life and because there is no issue more important than early childhood development.

Last month, in his address to a joint session of Congress, President Obama set a goal of ensuring that every child has access to a complete, competitive education from birth forward.

That is why Congress and President Obama worked together to increase funding by \$2.3 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start, and \$2.1 billion for the child care and development block grant in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the recent 2009 appropriations bill.

Because those investments will preserve and create jobs and improve access and quality for the children who need those programs. That is why I was so pleased to see that President Obama’s budget will commit significant new resources to early childhood.

Because the federal budget should reflect our values as a nation. And that is just what the President’s budget will do.

And that is why I look forward to this committee working with the President to help parents and educators make the early years of children’s lives nurturing and enriching. Because ensuring that children and their families have access to high-quality, comprehensive services that help the children develop cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally enables them to succeed in school and in life.

Children who receive quality early childhood education and development services do better in reading and math, and are more likely to graduate from high school attend college, and hold higher paying jobs. The support and security that these services provide infants, toddlers and young children help their brains develop in the early years and set the foundation – literally – for later development and learning.

These early stimulations – sound, sight, touch – actually lay down the physical circuitry of the brain. Wasted time diminishes that physical brain development.

We took some important steps last congress.

We reauthorized the Head Start Act to prioritize teacher quality and Early Head Start, among other things. I was proud to have been the chief sponsor of that bipartisan reauthorization along with Chairman Miller, Mr. Castle, Mr. Ehlens, and others. The Committee also reported my colleague Ms. Hirono's PRE-K Act.

But as we will hear today, meeting the goal that we share with President Obama is about more than any one program, but about ensuring that wherever children are, there are high standards, and the resources and accountability to ensure those standards are met.

I am confident that today's hearing will provide us with valuable information about the needs of young children and their families and what we can do to help meet those needs.

As a father, grandfather, and former teacher, I know that is the key to their success and our success as a nation.

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